



Implementing Your School Improvement Plan

Why take that plan off the shelf?

- To guarantee that neither the Plan nor the process by which it was developed was rushed... and that it reflects the perceptions and best judgment of all staff.
- To ensure that a wide cross section of staff and community has been actively involved in the Plan's development.
- To ensure that multiple mandates from many sources are coordinated through a single School Improvement Plan.
- To better guide well-intentioned service providers to stay focused on goals which the school chooses.

You'll know you've arrived when...

- The School Improvement Team rates the plan in the highest categories using the MI-Plan or NCA School Improvement rubric.
- The School Improvement Team can explain how the plan incorporates responses to federal, state, and local mandates.
- Technical assistance providers, professional developers and other partners receive clear orientation to the school's plan and how their roles fit into the overall work underway.
- School staff (including non-teaching staff) regularly receive updates on progress toward school improvement goals.
- Data shows that strategies identified in the plan are actually being implemented consistently.
- Parents and local media receive quarterly and annual reports highlighting strategies undertaken and results to date.

Construction Zone

Before proceeding, consider familiarizing your team with both the Michigan and North Central Accreditation processes. Each can be helpful in assessing and organizing improvement efforts.



It's about TIME

- 2-3 meetings to assess the current School Improvement Team or modify its composition. Realistically, this may be ongoing.
- Weekly meetings to problem-solve, coordinate action teams, and monitor progress.




Potential COSTS

Depending on your team's assessment of its needs, costs could include:

- Professional Development
- Peer feedback (or this could be exchanged with a sister school)
- Weekend off-site retreat
- Consultant/Coach fees

The Process

A step-by-step guide to establishing a structure that supports implementation of your School Improvement Plan

NOTE: Steps marked with a  are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

- 1 Schedule regular times** for your School Improvement Team (SIT) to meet. Make sure they're not all after school.
Provide released time for teachers so that some meetings take place as part of the school day. Four meetings per month are recommended in order to keep the rhythm of progress (and their responsibility for it) visible to team members. This is also an ideal time for Action Teams to meet, if possible.
 - 2 Use the SIT Agenda Template** to plan all meetings.
INSERTS for Step 2 suggest items to cover and serve as a planning tools for deciding how much time to allocate for each agenda item. Having a regular sequence helps the team know what to expect, so they can come prepared.
 - 3 Designate a Communications Liaison** who has the responsibility of publishing successes and keeping full staff (and community) apprised of the progress made toward School Improvement goals.
INSERT for Step 3 suggests a format for regular updates.
 - 4 Include Professional Development on local, state and federal mandates** for School Improvement Team members and any interested staff. Modify the plan, if necessary, in response to what you learn.
Once up-to-speed on the mandates, use as much time as necessary to assure team members that the plan you're operationalizing accomplishes all the requirements in a way that satisfies you. It's important that you can proceed with your single plan with confidence that you're doing all that needs to be done, and can shake off distracting calls to action in other directions.
 - 5 Collect evidence of student achievement** systematically.
Develop a simple process that allows staff to submit evidence of student achievement as outlined in the School Improvement Plan. INSERT for Step 5 suggests a blank template that could be offered periodically to allow staff to highlight work that might not be caught by the data collection systems the School Improvement Team has set up.
 - 6 Secure a renewed commitment** to follow through on the various action plans under the umbrella of the School Improvement Plan.
INSERT for Step 6 asks Action Teams to commit themselves to specific actions and then reflect on whether those actions are sufficient to produce real progress toward the goals.
 - 7 Align service providers** with the Plan's goals.
List all current providers, and use INSERT for Step 7 to negotiate accountability to the school's Improvement Plan. Then use it as a screening tool for hiring all future providers. Develop a one-page summary of the school's plan to give potential providers during this negotiation.
 - 8 Survey staff members** for their views of the actualization of your plan.
INSERT for Step 8 provides one possible survey tool.
 - 9 Use MI-Plan or North Central rubrics** periodically to assess your plan's relevance and the team's effectiveness as implementers.
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Getting more mileage from implementing your School Improvement Plan

How taking the plan off the shelf (and using it to steer by) benefits your school in regard to the following initiatives:

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

- A significant level of buy-in and collaboration are required from School Improvement Teams by this far-reaching legislation. The School Improvement Team should, therefore, be both knowledgeable about the main elements and able to share in writing or orally.

Education YES!

- As this statewide initiative is rolled out and modified, it will be incumbent upon School Improvement Teams to understand the key elements and explain the school's status to all staff and the community as the media presents its slant.

MI-Plan

- This web-based School Improvement Planning template is heavily based upon many of the expectations and procedures found in the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation & School Improvement Performance Accreditation model. In this model, School Improvement Teams use data to select student performance goals, interventions, assessments, professional development activities and action plans. Finally, the School Improvement Team must not only see the integration of all mandates/initiatives into a single plan but also communicate this notion to the full faculty.



Resources

Books

The School Portfolio Toolkit, Victoria L. Bernhardt. Eye on Education, Inc. 2002. 914/833-0551.

Bernhardt's comprehensive guide to developing what she calls a "school portfolio" includes highly practical chapters on tying professional development to the plan, setting up structures like these and then evaluating and re-adjusting implementation based on results.

Websites

MI-Plan

Michigan's web-based tool for School Improvement Plan development is available to schools at:

www.michigan.gov/miplan

You'll need a building-specific user ID and password available from your district superintendent's office. MI-Plan breaks plan development down into specific actions that facilitate accountability for implementation.

People

Specialists

Most Intermediate School Districts have a specialist working with schools on school improvement in their service areas.

Coaches

The *Alliance for Building Capacity in Schools* website lists coaches whose training has been provided by Michigan State University and supported by the Michigan Department of Education. Some are experienced in school improvement implementation in Michigan schools. Please visit:

www.abcscoaches.org

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